



One Wales: One Planet

Consultation on a new Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales

Summary

Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales has reviewed the Assembly Government’s draft consultation SD Scheme. Our main comments are that:

- We very much welcome the fact that the Scheme - its Vision of a sustainable Wales and the supporting definition of SD - will be the "*overarching strategic aim*" of the Welsh Assembly Government’s (WAGs) policies and programmes "*across all Ministerial portfolios*". We look forward to the implementation of this.
- Whilst the draft Scheme *is* ambitious in its aim to achieve a One Planet Nation, this is undermined by the lack of focus on priority issues. As the document is set out at present, it is not clear which of the numerous areas of concern take priority.
- We are concerned as to whether the listed actions have been identified because they will have the greatest (evidence based) impact towards achieving a sustainable Wales, or whether they are simply ‘SD-complimentary’ actions lifted from the short-term *One Wales* programme of Government.
- Real progress will depend on everyone working together. Consequently, we very much welcome the valuable opportunity that the decision to remake the Scheme offers, in terms of engaging the people of Wales in SD. This is especially the case given the apparent desire for the Scheme to evolve from a legally required and internally-focussed document, into one that WAG believes "*should be seen as a sustainable development scheme for the people of Wales*" and "*will allow organisations in Wales to align their activities to*".
- Such a transformation will not happen by itself but will need a population and workforce (and particularly a civil service and public sector) with new skills and understanding. The critical issue of skills, capacity building and training should therefore have a higher profile throughout the whole document.
- We are fully committed to supporting the Assembly Government and its partners on the delivery of this ambitious and exciting agenda, especially on the behaviour change and engagement aspects of the work.

Introduction

Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that promotes sustainable development (SD) and provides practical information to

help people in Wales live sustainably. We work with a wide range of people and organisations across a broad range of issues – from climate change to economy and from fair trade to health. Our work focuses on three key areas:

- Promoting Action and Debate
- Changing Behaviour
- Influencing Government

The response provided below is a synthesis of comments and suggestions that we have gathered from:

- Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales' members, friends and directory-registered projects (during the Call to Action project that resulted in our *Transformation Nation* report and, more recently, contributions received in direct response to the consultation document);
- The Transformation Nation partners (namely Oxfam Cymru, BRASS, Science Shops Wales, Environment Agency, Groundwork Wales, WWF Cymru, RSPB Cymru);
- Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales' board members and staff.

In addition to this, our responses have also been informed by comments made by participants at the three WAG consultation events, as interpreted by our Policy Manager and Policy Adviser who were facilitators at these events.

Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales submitted the *Transformation Nation* report in September 2008 to inform the remake of the Scheme at an early stage, and we are pleased that many of our recommendations appear to have been taken on board.

In this report, we recommended that the new Scheme *must* achieve three things by 2012:

- To transform how SD principles are embedded into WAG policy, and to increase understanding and leadership across the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- To put in place policies that promote SD in the priority areas of transport, energy, economic development, food and housing;
- To support an increase in grass-roots action and enable sustainable lifestyles.

These top level suggestions under-lie the comments below in response to the consultation draft.

Specific Questions

Q1. Is the overall purpose of the scheme, and how you should use it, clear – and if not what else should it say to reflect your input into working towards a sustainable Wales?

Positioning of the Scheme - Sustainable Development as a Central Organising Principle

We very much welcome the fact that the Scheme - its Vision of a sustainable Wales and the supporting definition of SD - will be the "*overarching strategic aim*" of the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAGs) policies and programmes "*across all Ministerial portfolios*". We look forward to the implementation of this, and suggest that when new policies and programmes are announced, their alignment (or conflict) with the stated aspirations should be clearly stated by the relevant Minister.

Format and Presentation

As currently presented, the key messages within the Scheme (such as the desired aim of wider engagement and organisational alignment, and even the Vision itself) do not stand out, in what is at times an unnecessarily wordy document. We suggest that the Scheme could make more of an impact, and achieve the desired engagement, if it was simplified in terms of its content, format and presentation as follows:

The Scheme (presented as a long-term, apolitical SD framework **that is distinctive to Wales**)

- Section 1: Definition of SD and the five UK SD principles;
- Section 2: A brief description of the unsustainable nature of Wales now, the referenced scientific evidence base demonstrating the imperatives for transformational change, followed by the Vision of a sustainable Wales;
- Section 3: An outline of the purpose of the document (including the role of others - see below);
- Section 4: The desired, long-term outcomes of the Scheme;
- Section 5: Where to go for help and advice.

WAG's Plan for Delivery (to be updated by new administrations as they see fit)

- Part 1: Actions to be undertaken by WAG (during this administration, linking to One Wales) and the operational principles guiding these (i.e. the principles outlined on pg. 11);
- Part 2: The indicators that will be used to monitor the implementation of the Scheme on a National basis;
- Part 3: UK, European and International context and how the Assembly Government will connect to/influence at this level.

Clarity of purpose

We suggest that Section 3, the purpose of the Scheme, is redrafted in a way that emphasises and clarifies that:

- This is a crucial and timely Scheme for the people of Wales, that is long-term and apolitical;

- Explains clearly what the One Planet Wales concept means – ‘*using our fair share of the earth’s resources*’ with a brief explanation of ecological foot-printing;
- SD will from now on be WAG’s central, organising principle, and that outlined in the accompanying ‘Plan for Delivery’ are this administration’s commitments to a series of actions that will help lead the country towards achieving this end goal;
- WAG hopes that its own actions and indicators will provide a template that will inspire and motivate other organisations to do the same;
- WAG wants the Scheme to be used actively by all organisations in Wales, to help them plan and deliver their work and activities, by aligning these to the Vision of a sustainable Wales.

As the document is set out at present, it is also not clear which of the numerous areas of concern take priority. The eco-footprint analysis at the front of the document presents clear evidence of 4 ‘crunch issues’ the Scheme should tackle as a priority, such as housing, food, transport, and energy. This clarity of purpose does not translate throughout the rest of the document.

Involvement and Integration: The role of others, and of Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales

Real progress will depend on everyone working together. Consequently, we very much welcome the valuable opportunity that the decision to remake the Scheme offers, in terms of engaging the people of Wales in SD. This is especially the case given the apparent desire for the Scheme to evolve from a legally required and internally-focussed document, into one that WAG believes “*should be seen as a sustainable development scheme for the people of Wales*” and “*will allow organisations in Wales to align their activities to*”.

As an organisation, we are extremely keen to ensure that the Scheme does achieve such wider involvement and engagement. However, we believe that this is hampered by a lack of clarity as to who the document is aimed at, and who should be doing what to deliver it. The role of others (beyond WAG) in achieving a sustainable Wales is currently hidden away in the third paragraph on pg 8 outlining the purpose of the Scheme, and in Annex 2. It is vital, but should be by no means difficult, to address this shortfall.

Throughout the consultation process we have observed a near unanimous desire to see that this Scheme resonates with *all* organisations and communities. The recommendations contained in the DESH research report ‘*Policy options for stimulating and supporting community action for Climate Change in Wales*’ are also relevant in relation to this, as well as the recommendations in our *Transformation Nation* report (pg 39) on scaling up community action and enabling sustainable lifestyles.

We therefore propose that ‘Section 5’ (as named within our suggested format of the final document), should also signpost organisations and individuals to sources of information and support that will help them to do this.

In relation to this, we believe that Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales - through a range of communication methods, using sector-specific language - could play an important role in helping to achieve the principles of involvement and integration. We propose to:

- Help finalise the long-term, ambitious and compelling vision of what a sustainable Wales would look like (in line with our response to Question 2, below);
- Popularise and promote the Scheme, and encourage 'sign-up' to the Vision (e.g. through its networks and public events);
- Explain the importance of the Scheme, what it means for different sectors and where they can find relevant information and support (e.g. via sector specific web-pages);
- Facilitate a process of sectoral engagement (e.g. a wider 'Coalition of the Willing', around the One Planet Wales aspirations);
- Publicise what people / organisations are doing to achieve the Vision (e.g. via a refreshed online directory - allowing individuals, organisations and groups to see the growing commitment, across Wales, towards the Schemes aspirations);
- Monitor and promote engagement (e.g. the undertaking of 'Sustainable Living' surveys and IT-enabled, targeted communications working);
- Recognise / reward good practice (e.g. SD, multi-sector 'One Planet Wales' awards);
- Take a lead in changing public attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable lifestyles.

Q2. Is the new Vision helpful to you as a long term view of a sustainable Wales that you can aim towards?

The two 'key themes'

The proposed SD Scheme has adopted the twin themes of improving the lives of communities – particularly the worst off; and reducing our environmental impact – as measured by Wales' ecological footprint.

We welcome the key theme of reducing environmental impact, working towards achieving a One Planet Nation and the use of ecological foot-printing. However, we believe that more could be made of this, by ensuring that this theme is carried throughout the document by, for example, demonstrating to what extent the sum of the WAG actions will contribute to putting us on the path towards achieving a One Planet Nation.

We also welcome the parallel key theme of social justice – and of helping those that are the worst off in our society. However, as it stands, the Vision gives the impression that the theme of social justice is an 'add-on', rather than an integral part.

Rather than stating, at the end, that we must "*do all this in ways which make us a fairer society, reducing the gap between rich and poor, building on our commitments to tackling child fuel poverty*", it may be more effective to have separate bullet points that better illustrate what society would look like in a sustainable Wales (in terms of, for example, health, education, life satisfaction etc). Recent research by Oxfam¹, for example, identifies a number of 'virtuous circle' projects that meet social, environmental and economic objectives.

Distinctiveness

We welcome the idea of providing a 'Vision' of a sustainable Wales for people to work towards, and to help illustrate the meaning of SD. We would suggest, however, that this Vision needs to be more specific to Wales, with greater evidence of the population's sense of identity and their aspirations for Wales. This could include, for example, reference to:

- Geographic and topographic distinctiveness;
- This being a collective project to set Wales on a different path, which because of our size can be achievable and manageable;
- Development of 'brand' One-Planet Wales;
- Welsh culture and language (e.g. supporting Iaith Pawb's vision of a bi-lingual Wales and creating an enabling environment in which this can happen).

Common Purpose

Many of the community groups and SD practitioners that we have spoken to, often working in isolated circumstances, have expressed their desire a SD narrative to align their work with, so that they feel that they are working towards a collective endeavour. We therefore believe that a more detailed Vision, which describes what Wales will look like, will encourage external organisations to sign-up to the Scheme.

We like the approach taken in the Vision of the draft Climate Change Strategy because it is more detailed, and translates what a low-carbon Wales will actually look like. In comparison, the Vision as currently set out in the Scheme is too vague and abstract. Relating to this, we believe that there needs to be consistency between the Vision in the SD Scheme and in any other 'Visions' that are part of WAG strategies - such as the draft Climate Change Strategy, and the Wales Spatial Plan national and area frameworks.

In addition to how a sustainable Wales would look, and be achieved, reference should be made to the contribution that Wales can/should make towards achieving a sustainable *planet*. This could include, for example, reference to:

- Use of only our fair share of the earth's resources and our commitment to reducing the global ecological footprint (rather than only that of Wales);
- Support for fair trade;

¹Tackling climate change, reducing poverty: The first report of the Roundtable on Climate Change and Poverty in the UK, January 2009

- Reducing CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050;
- Sharing of skills, knowledge and technologies.

As stated above, we also believe that it should be presented as a long-term Vision for Wales. The current references to the One Wales Programme for Government, and existing WAG targets, present the Vision as being primarily WAG's responsibility and based on the political choices of the current administration. We believe that greater involvement, 'sign-up' and shared responsibility would be achieved if, instead, the Vision presented a long-term, apolitical goal based on the most recent scientific evidence. We therefore suggest that such references be confined to a separate 'Plan' dedicated to WAG-specific actions. Beyond this, the Scheme should challenge all political party manifestos in Wales to show how proposed policies will relate to the SD Scheme.

Ambition

The scale of ambition of the Scheme is as important as the level of the detail. Whilst the draft Scheme *is* ambitious in its aim to achieve a One Planet Nation, this is undermined by the lack of focus on priority issues and by a lack of detail on process issues of how SD will be mainstreamed.

We also believe that if this is to be a 'Vision' and a description of the 'end goal' of a sustainable Wales, there is room for *more* ambition. For example, rather than "*moving towards becoming a zero waste nation*", there could be an ambition to *be* a zero waste nation (following the lead of New Zealand, the first country in the world to have formally adopted Zero Waste).²

The Transformation and Learning Required

We very much welcome the acknowledgement that the achievement of a sustainable Wales will "*require radical change in all sectors of society*". However, we would suggest that a stronger presentation of the urgency of this transformation – with an explanation, or tightening up, of the timescale of "*the lifetime of a generation*". This wording is felt to be vague and confusing.

We also think that it would be useful to demonstrate the radical change needed by describing the unsustainable nature of our current situation – in order to convince people of the need to engage, and to highlight the challenges and learning that will be involved in achieving a sustainable Wales. This could be done, for example, by:

- Using images to compare the current ecological footprint and the one we should be aiming to achieve;
- The presentation of current CO2 / health / obesity / poverty / use of Welsh Language statistics and the levels that we need to be aiming for;
- Outlining the role of research, innovation, education and the use of sound science in the Vision.

² <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/waste/waste-strategy-mar02/>

Such a transformation will not happen by itself but will need a population and workforce (and particularly a civil service and public sector) with new skills and understanding. The critical issue of skills, capacity building and training should therefore have a higher profile throughout the whole document.

To make SD the central organising principle within the Assembly, we recommend that the WAG and National Assembly for Wales establish mandatory SD leadership courses and learning networks for senior civil servants and AMs via Public Service Management Wales. We also recommend that within the lifetime of the Scheme, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills undertakes an audit of the skills required and available in Wales to achieve the Vision, and implements an up-skilling programme to fill the gaps. This could be linked to the Green Jobs Strategy and the sectors this identifies for expansion.

The 'how'

We are of the opinion that the Vision is lacking in details as to 'how' it will be achieved. As state above, we would suggest that the Vision needs to be presented as something that WAG would like everyone to 'sign-up' to, contribute to, and take some responsibility for. Greater clarity in this regard, could be achieved by, for example:

- Separating the list of WAG actions and the references to other policy commitments (and how old ones will be adjusted to fit with this ambition);
- Clearly stating how everyone else can / should take part in the 'Purpose' section of the Scheme.

Q3. Are the key outcomes sufficiently clear and comprehensive to help you align your activities as you plan and deliver your actions in support of a sustainable Wales?

In our opinion, greater coherency is needed between these outcomes and the rest of the document. We would suggest that greater thought needs to be given to whether the outcomes of the Scheme should be either:

- The long term goals for everyone (in which case this section should possibly be merged with the Vision, or restricted to the evidence-based urgencies / indisputables), or
- Time-specific goals for specific stakeholders (in which case the outcomes should be much tighter and prioritised)

Q4. Are the specific actions and commitments helpful in demonstrating our commitment to SD and the route we will take?

We welcome the apparent effort that has been made to engage all WAG departments in making commitments to the Scheme. It is vital that all departments are engaged in and can evidence the promotion of sustainable

development across the functions of the Assembly Government to which their work relates. Greater details on the process by which this mainstreaming will be achieved would also be welcomed.

However, we are concerned as to whether the listed actions have been identified because they will have the greatest (evidence based) impact towards achieving a sustainable Wales, or whether they are simply 'SD-complimentary' actions lifted from the short-term *One Wales* programme of Government.

Whilst it is helpful to see which actions within *One Wales* are deemed to be contributing towards *One Planet Wales*, there is no evidence-based expression of the impact these listed actions will have, nor of the sum-total impact of all activity within the *One Wales* programme of Government towards (or contrary) to the aspirations of this overarching statutory scheme.

The '**how**' dimension was felt to be missing within the listed actions and commitments. Action 12, towards achieving a 'Fair and Just Society' was felt to typify a lack of correlation between ambitious outcome and subsequent action. Greater detail would need to be provided on the suggested 'reconfiguration' of the Communities First programme for Action 12 to stand as a realistic means to achieving this complex and ambitious outcome (p35 full document).

Finally, we suggest that an explanation is needed to clarify that it is not these actions alone that will achieve the Vision and the outcomes, but also:

- Other supporting WAG strategies and policy commitments (such as the Climate Change Strategy, the Wales Spatial Plan and the Green Jobs Strategy);
- Refer back to the 'role of others', as outlined in our response to Question 1.

Furthermore, explanation should be given as to how conflicting strategies and policies will be adapted so as to be aligned with this new, overarching, statutory SD Vision (reinforcing the Scheme's position as a high level, long-term framework document which informs all other WAG plans and programmes).

Both at its inception and throughout the Scheme's lifetime, it is critical that there is consistency in how all WAG departments, advisors, and public agencies interpret the latest scientific evidence base, to avoid policies that mitigate against each other and contradictory messaging to external audiences as has often been the case in the past.

Q5. Are the suite of SD indicators comprehensive to act as clear drivers and provide sufficient clarity about the direction of travel to help measure progress to SD, and do they help you align the way you measure your organisation's contribution and progress towards SD?

We believe that the indicators are extremely important as one means of measuring progress towards achieving a sustainable Wales. We believe that in order to make the most of the data they provide, they should be used in a way that is as frequent as possible and better publicised. We believe that this will help

to make the Scheme and its corresponding actions 'believable', in the eyes of the public, and will help the Scheme to remain prominent throughout the year.

We think that it is necessary to signpost other organisations and individuals to other methods that they could use to measure their progress in contributing to a sustainable Wales, as these indicators are difficult to translate or employed by organisations outside of WAG.

We welcome the decision to develop a well-being indicator, and will be interested to learn more about its development. It is vital that a wellbeing indicator is developed and begins to drive sustainable development as the central organising principle within WAG. Developing such an indicator will be challenging and it is crucial that stakeholders are engaged in the process of shaping the measurement of well-being.

The challenge is to develop an indicator set that collectively works towards the aspirations and outcomes this Scheme articulates. We suggest that this Scheme must articulate the desired interplay between developmental objectives and the indicator outcomes that would evidence improvement towards the aspirations of this Scheme. It may be that rising GDP or GVA can be reconciled with a falling ecological footprint and improvements in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The task is to achieve synergy of purpose and policy, and to avoid progress in one area that negatively impacts upon another objective.

Ends.

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